Mr Phillip Reese Our ref: WX/2019/133651/OR-

Dorset Council 02/IS1-L01
Planning and Community Services Your ref:

South Walks House South Walks Road

Dorchester Dorset DT1 1UZ **Date:** 19 March 2020

Dear Mr Reese

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above Neighbourhood Plan. I am responding on behalf of my colleague, Michael Holm.

We aim to reduce flood risk, whilst protecting and enhancing the water environment. We focus our detailed engagement where the environmental risks are greatest, therefore we offer the following advice on your Neighbourhood Plan.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: Planning for the Environment at the Neighbourhood Level.

Flood Risk

National and Local Plan Policy approach is to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding from any source are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. The aim should be to keep development out of medium and high flood risk areas, and other areas affected by flooding.

We would remind you that Local planning authorities' Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) should be the primary source of flood risk information in considering whether particular neighbourhood planning areas may be appropriate for development. Other important sources include the interactive maps of flood risk available on the Environment Agency's web site. There may also be specific issues or local policies, e.g. a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or Surface Water Management Plan, which should be considered when assessing and managing surface water matters. The Lead Local Flood Authority should be consulted regarding any potential flooding from surface waters.

Biodiversity

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.

Environment Agency Rivers House East Quay, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4YS. Similarly the <u>Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (February 2018)</u> has a policy for embedding an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.

We note your Neighbourhood Plan Policies are seeking opportunities to enhance levels of green infrastructure and biodiversity and are in support of this, particularly Policies SFGI1, SFGI2 and SFGI3.

Biodiversity enhancement in and around development should be led by a local understanding of ecological networks, and should seek to include:

- habitat restoration, re-creation and expansion;
- improved links between existing sites;
- buffering of existing important sites;
- new biodiversity features within development; and
- securing management for long term enhancement.
- Green/blue infrastructure and recreational opportunities

Further guidance can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment

Further advice on the production of Neighbourhood Plans can be found at the <u>Planning Advisory Service</u> function of the Local Government Association, which has detailed advice on neighbourhood planning.

If you have any queries with regard to the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned direct. Please continue to direct any correspondence to swx.sp@environment-agency.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Richard Jenkyns (on behalf of Michael Holm Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor

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